

**Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of:)	
)	
Petition of Somos, Inc. for a Declaratory)	WC Docket 95-155
Ruling Regarding Registration of)	
Text-Enabled Toll Free Numbers)	WT Docket No. 08-7
)	

Comments in Support

On behalf of the Association of Toll Free Professionals (ATFP), I hereby submit comments in response to the Federal Communications Commission's November 4, 2016, Public Notice, seeking comments regarding the above-captioned matter.

Members and associates of ATFP hold many of the exclusive-by-market vanity toll-free programs in existence today. Programs such as 1-800-Home-Care, 1-800-Pavement, 1-800-Injured, 1-800-800-Cars, 1-800-Lawyers, and 1-800-Attorney are examples of exclusive-by-market licensing. Twenty-five years ago voice and fax were the only major channels of communication, other than USPS. Today, end users expect to send text messaging and hold an absolute expectation that any text to a trusted toll-free voice number will reach the intended party, and no one else.

No one is disadvantaged by granting these Declaratory Rulings, certainly not text-enablers like Zip Whip. This is about maintaining the integrity of the toll-free numbers and the trust built up over decades of use.

What the TSS registry does, in effect, is create *two-party consent*, where one of the parties, the RespOrg, is the actual, lawful *agent* of the subscriber. The other party is the text enabler, who *cannot know* if they are acting for the rightful Customer of Record.

The rogue practice of text-enabling TFN's simply by requesting a bill copy or dialing the number alone is naïve and dangerous. The only way to discern the actual Customer of Record, from an apparent or fraudulent one, is for the authorized RespOrg to compare the activation request to the privately listed data—which is illegal to share with 3rd parties. Two-party consent has proven extremely effective to combating fraudulent use¹ of toll-free numbers, since introduced with portability in 1993.

The current practice of unilateral activations, supported by Zip Whip, has no such safeguards and allows anyone with a bill copy— or a made-up bill copy— to activate texting on a toll-free number they do not own. To expand on Zip Whip's bank² example:

*“A bank, for example, can notify existing customers of fraud alerts on the same 10-digit number that rings to the bank's call center. This timely notification from a **familiar number** to the customer is critically important in protecting consumers from scams and other malicious activity. This is both pro-consumer and pro-business.” [Emphasis added]*

In contrast to their contention that this is somehow “*pro-consumer*,” such a text is a perfect *phishing* link. An unsuspecting customer will likely assume it is their bank, because of the “*familiar number*” displayed, and give away their login credentials.

As most of us have experienced, smart phones automatically display the name associated with an incoming text, should it be in your contact list. More recently, smart phones even suggest names, based on numbers found in emails and other sources.

¹ Actual use conversion, not Caller ID spoofing, which is widespread.

² Zip Whip's May 26, 2016 letter to Ms. Marlene H Hortch, Secretary, FCC

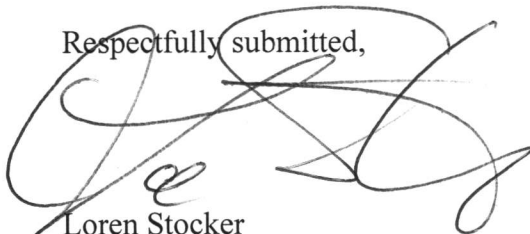
It is because Call ID *cannot* be spoofed on toll-free texts, that we must safeguard activations. Business and reputation are at stake here, and the best way to combat such abuse is with the *two-party consent* of the TSS Registry.

In addition, we need *technical parity* with both local texting capabilities and voice calling, to be competitive in the market and for toll-free texting to grow. Much of this was outlined in the Somos response³ letter, but three key deficiencies are:

- Local number texting allows for pictures to be sent (MMS) as well as text (SMS). Without universal MMS, toll-free texting is a *degraded* service.
- Local numbers texting and toll-free calls advise users whenever the text or call does not complete ("*Cannot be completed as dialed*," for example). Without similar feedback, toll-free texting is a *degraded* service.
- Toll-Free calls are truncate beyond the 7th digit, allowing calls to 1-800-State-Farm or 1-800-Progressive to complete. Without truncation, toll-free texting is *degraded* and we cannot text to valuable vanity numbers, such as these.

We're all in this together. Let's move forward and bring the 21st century capabilities to business texting. That's what we've all come to expect.

Respectfully submitted,



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³ Somos' response to Zip Whip, July 1, 2016, letter to Ms. Marlene Dortch